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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003901

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: NINEWA: VICE GOVERNOR HINTS AT KURDISH FLEXIBILITY  
ON ARTICLE 140 IN NINEWA

REF: A. BAGHDAD 0276  
[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 0559  
[1](#)C. BAGHDAD 0570  
[1](#)D. BAGHDAD 1012  
[1](#)E. BAGHDAD 02473

Classified By: Ninewa PRT Leader Jason Hyland for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)  
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This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

[1](#)1. (C/REL ACGU) Ninewa's influential Vice Governor, who is also the provincial Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) head, told PRT Leader November 11 in the presence of a visiting reporter that he recognized the importance of being practical in making compromises in resolving disputed areas under Article [1](#)140. The Vice Governor said that an ad hoc committee of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) and Kurdish political leaders from Ninewa, Kirkuk and Diyala met November 8 in Erbil to discuss a policy direction on the implementation process for Article 140. He mentioned policy implementation differences based in conflicting KRG ambitions in the three provinces, but, "we are realistic, we will not win 100% of what we want, perhaps only 50%." The continued focus on process suggests the KRG remains confident of its ability to formally secure further territory through Article 140, though this first public hint of territorial flexibility is a positive development.

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Devil in the Details  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) Vice Governor Khasro Goran said the ad hoc committee, consisting of the KRG ministers for Extra Regional Affairs and Reconstruction, KRG MP Dr. Nouri Talibani and another KRG MP, gathered to answer basic process questions put last week to the national Article 140 Committee by the Iraqi High Electoral Commission. Besides Khasro, the governors of Kirkuk and Diyala attended to hammer out four essential procedural points:

- the residency requirements for voter participation in the referendum;
- the boundaries of the "disputed" territories under Article 140;
- the level - provincial, district or sub-district - affected by the referendum (which according to Khasro would favor Kurdish ambitions in Kirkuk, Diyala and Ninewa respectively); and
- the mechanics of the referendum, i.e. plurality, majority or super-majority, simple up or down on joining the KRG or multiple choice join, status-quo or undefined "special status."

13. (SBU) The Vice Governor gave his opinion on how the specific disputed territories of each province will play out:

-- Ninewa: Sinjar, Sheikhan, Makmour, Zumar, and Qahtaniya and Hamman al Alil will vote to join the KRG (Note: all these districts and sub-districts are already being administered by the KDP as though part of the KRG). Tal Kaif's and Hamdaniya's fates will be decided by the Christians (Khasro earlier gave 50/50 odds to these districts) while, according to Khasro, Sistani, via the Shia Turkmen will decide the fate of Tal Afar city. He said clearly that the strategic area of Rabiya, which is dominated by Sunni Arab tribes, would not/not vote to be part of the KRG. (Note: the sub-district of Tal Afar would provide a land connection between far-western Sinjar district and the KRG but leave the tribal Arab dominated sub-district of Rabiya, with the important Port of Entry to Syria, cut off from the rest of Arab Iraq).

-- Kirkuk: The vote for the province as a whole would be to join the KRG, but Khasro favors a solution by which the Arab-majority districts, such as Haweeja, are attached to Salah al-Din.

-- Diyala: Khasro was confident that the Kurdish majority districts of Kifri, Khanaqeen and Mandli would vote to join the KRG.

He ended the public part of the meeting saying, "I think implementing the article is possible if people move beyond purely ethnic concerns. If we can compromise, this will lessen the tensions."

14. (C/REL ACGU) In private, TL Hyland stressed the

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importance of Kurdish restraint. TL Hyland expressed to the Vice Governor how closely the USG was watching developments in Ninewa, and how important it was to lessen tensions between ethnic groups at this critical time.

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Comment  
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15. (C/REL ACGU) This was the first time the Vice Governor has ever hinted to us that the KDP was looking at the practical, political realities of Ninewa, and not just the formal Article 140 process, in choosing a way forward. It was also significant that he decided to make this statement on record with an American reporter in the room. Kurdish influence in Ninewa has many positive aspects, but Kurdish, specifically KDP, efforts at territorial expansion of the KRG have created serious and long-term tensions between the Kurdish and Arab communities with Ninewa's minority communities caught in the middle. The PRT will continue to monitor the situation.  
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